

2-9-2011

We Are ... Marshall, February 9, 2011

Office of Marshall University Communications

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The Newsletter for Marshall University

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Frontier presents June Harless Center with \$200,000



From left, Sen. Bob Plymale, chair of the Senate Education Committee; Dennis Bloss, Area General Manager for Frontier Communications; Dr. Gayle Ormiston, provost at Marshall University; Dr. Stan Maynard, director of the June Harless Center; and Dr. Robert Bookwalter, dean of Marshall's College of Education and Human Services, pose behind an oversize check for \$200,000 presented Friday by Frontier to the June Harless Center.

Frontier Communications has presented \$200,000 to Marshall for the June Harless Center for Rural Educational Research and Development. The grant is for 21st century technology to advance educational programs and training in West Virginia. Specifically, it involves support for a Virtual S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Academy.

"The June Harless Center is extremely grateful for this gift from Frontier Communications," said Dr. Stan Maynard, director of the June Harless Center. "We are pleased that Frontier has the confidence not only in Marshall University, but the June Harless Center in making this initiative successful."

[Read more.](#)

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Marshall to observe 50th anniversary as a university March 2 at the Capitol



Marshall's annual Marshall Day at the Capitol will take place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, March 2. This is a day where students, faculty and staff travel to the state capitol in Charleston to display the work that happens daily at the university.

This year's event will include special tributes to the 50th anniversary of the signing of the law proclaiming Marshall College a university March 2, 1961. The university's highway historical marker and an exhibit of photos and documents from the university archives will be on display. A commemorative issue of The Parthenon also will be available. Student Government Association representatives and Mr. and Ms. Marshall will be recognized by the West Virginia House and Senate.

Departmental or program representatives interested in participating should contact Nancy Pelphrey in Alumni Affairs by phone at 304-696-3134 or by e-mail at Pelphrey@marshall.edu to check on space availability, parking and other details.

Stephanie Smith named Director of Purchasing

Stephanie Smith is the new director of purchasing at Marshall University, effective Feb. 1. She replaces Dennis Meadows, who retired.

Smith previously was a purchasing agent at Marshall, where she has been employed since June 1988. A native of Huntington, she has a regent's degree and a master's degree in education from Marshall.



[Read more.](#)

17 Marshall students among participants in Undergraduate Research Day



President Kopp (left) talks with Emily Beckethelmer about her project at the state Capitol Jan. 25.

Eighty-eight students representing 15 West Virginia universities and colleges, including 17 from Marshall University, presented their discoveries in poster format in the 8th annual Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol in Charleston Tuesday, Jan. 25.

The event helps members of the state Legislature and the executive branch understand the importance of undergraduate research by talking directly with the students who produced these projects. The projects are original research and the posters are designed for a general audience.

[Read more.](#)

Expert on Haiti to lecture tonight

A special presentation by Haiti expert Kiran Jayaram one year after the earthquake that killed 300,000 people will take place Wednesday, Feb. 9, on the

Jayaram, an anthropologist specializing in Haiti and a Ph.D. candidate at Columbia University, will be talking about Haitian history and culture as well as the

Huntington campus.

aftermath of the earthquake. He also will be speaking to several classes before and after his presentation.

[Read more.](#)

2011 Technology Summit Under Way Today, Tomorrow

The 2011 Technology Summit is taking place today and tomorrow in the Drinko Library.

The summit is sponsored by Information Technology: Online Learning & Libraries, Academic Affairs, and MU-ADVANCE.

Seminars and presentations from Drinko 349 also are being aired at the South Charleston Campus, in MUGC 134. The summit will be two days of workshops, seminars and poster sessions regarding not only the services Information Technology offers, but library services as well.

[Read more.](#)

Lecture to explore connection between art, spirituality

Art professor Peter Massing will present a lecture on art and spirituality Thursday, Feb. 10, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in Smith Hall 154. It is open to the public.

The presentation, titled "Process: a Path Toward Creative Expression" will address the connection between process and spirituality.

This exhibition coincides with the current Gallery 842 exhibition, On Spirituality: Emerging Visions of the Spiritual.

"The topics for the lecture will attempt to reveal answers for the following questions: Where does the process begin and where does it end? What constitutes a collection? How does research, awareness, and process guide our visual inquiry?

The topics are very open-ended and I plan to provide some time at the end for discussion and/or questions," Massing said.

Civil rights activist Joan C. Browning to speak

Joan C. Browning, a Civil Rights activist and one of the original nine Freedom Riders in Albany, Ga., in 1961, will speak at Marshall Thursday, Feb. 17.

Browning's talk, which is free to the public, begins at 7 p.m. in Room BE 5 in the basement of the Memorial Student Center. She is speaking as part of Marshall's new program in African and African American Studies.

[Read more.](#)

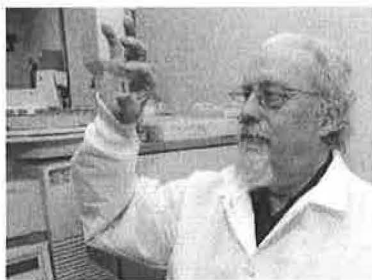
College of Health Professions to offer first Master of Science in Health Informatics in West Virginia

The College of Health Professions is offering a new interdisciplinary graduate program in Health Informatics on its Huntington campus. The degree is the first Master of Science in Health Informatics to be offered in West Virginia.

As the first truly intercollegiate program offered at Marshall, courses for the degree will come from the College of Health Professions, the College of Information Technology and Engineering, and the Lewis College of Business.

[Read more.](#)

Forensics professor receives federal grant to analyze interpretation of fire debris



Marshall University has received a \$540,752 grant from the National Institute of Justice for a two-year project to study factors that affect interpretation of data by fire debris analysts and to develop a computer program to aid in interpretation.

Dr. J. Graham Rankin (left), a professor of forensic chemistry in the Forensic Science Graduate Program, is conducting the study, which began January 1, 2011.

[Read more.](#)

Benefit to assist physician in Haiti

The Marshall University Department of Orthopaedic Surgery will have a fund-raiser Saturday, Feb. 12, to assist a Haiti physician with whom Marshall faculty and staff have worked in providing aid to Haitians in the wake of the 2010 earthquake.

The physician, Dr. Edmond Elysee, is medical director of Double Harvest Hospital, which has housed Marshall medical professionals and others during relief visits to Haiti. His home was destroyed in the earthquake, and he and his wife also have lost their personal vehicles, which were frequently used to transport patients to and from the hospital.

[Read more.](#)

Faculty/Staff Achievements

Three Marshall counseling faculty members attended and contributed to the recent Professional Counselors Day in Charleston, an annual event hosted at the State Capitol during the legislative session.

Attending the event were assistant professors of counseling Dr. Andrew Burck, Dr. Lori Ellison and Dr. Carol Smith. In addition, Jason Newsome, president of the West Virginia Counselors Association and an adjunct faculty member at Marshall, attended, along with approximately 50 professional counselors and several students. One of the goals of the group was to raise awareness of the counseling profession at the West Virginia Legislature. A proclamation on their behalf was read in the House of Delegates.

Profile: Nat DeBruin

- a series on interesting Marshall University people



Go to the second floor of the Morrow Library and you will find Nat DeBruin, archivist, manuscript librarian, and adjunct faculty member, who can guide you through thousands of linear feet of archival materials, from the earliest document—a copy of the 1837 land deed that handed Marshall Academy property over to the Methodist Church which was the formation of Marshall University, to yesterday's Parthenon.

"The archives are the records of the university," he says. "It's anything that has been published by the university, especially as it relates to academic/faculty/student life."

[Read more.](#)

The next issue of *We Are...Marshall* will be distributed Feb. 23, 2011. Please send any materials for consideration to [Pat Dickson](#) by Feb. 21.



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"The June Harless Center is extremely grateful for this gift from Frontier Communications," said Dr. Stan Maynard, director of the June Harless Center. "We are pleased that Frontier has the confidence not only in Marshall University, but the June Harless Center in making this initiative successful."

Dennis Bloss, Area General Manager for Frontier, said the telecommunications services provider recognizes the commitment that June Harless and her family have made to improve education in West Virginia. The late June Harless was the wife of James "Buck" Harless of Gilbert and one of southern West Virginia's most avid supporters of education and medical research.

"The June Harless Center and Marshall University have a clear and bold mission - to provide West Virginia's young people with the skills they will need to compete globally in an economically competitive world," Bloss said. "An academy that uses technology to support the teaching of science, math and other critical subjects is the right program at the right place at the right time."

Maynard said the focus of the Virtual S.T.E.M. Academy will be to assist schools in providing special training in integrating technology into Pre-K - 12 classrooms; enrich S.T.E.M. curricular opportunities for rural students who may have difficulty accessing advanced S.T.E.M. classes; provide tutoring support for students enrolled in Advanced Placement S.T.E.M. courses; and provide training for educators in utilizing an academic management system for efficient on-line instruction and assessment.

Frontier Communications Corporation (NYSE: FTR) offers voice, High-Speed Internet, satellite video, wireless Internet data access, data security solutions, bundled offerings, specialized bundles for small businesses and home offices, and advanced business communications Access Solutions for medium and large businesses in 27 states and with approximately 14,800 employees. More information is available at www.frontier.com and www.frontier.com/ir.

Photo: From left, Sen. Bob Plymale, chair of the Senate Education Committee; Dennis Bloss, Area General Manager for Frontier Communications; Dr. Gayle Ormiston, provost at Marshall University; Dr. Stan Maynard, director of the June Harless Center; and Dr. Robert Bookwalter, dean of Marshall's College of Education and Human Services, pose behind an oversized check for \$200,000 presented today by Frontier to the June Harless Center.

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Stephanie Smith named director of purchasing



Stephanie Smith is the new director of purchasing at Marshall University, effective Feb. 1. She replaces Dennis Meadows, who retired.

Smith previously was a purchasing agent at Marshall, where she has been employed since June 1988. A native of Huntington, she has a regent's degree and a master's degree in education from Marshall.

Smith has three daughters - Demeley, Dominique and Dionna, and one grandson, Kenny. Demeley and Dominique are Marshall graduates. She has been married to Clifton Smith for 29 years.

"I'm very blessed to be able to continue my career in a field that I'm very familiar with," Smith said. "It makes the transition much easier, especially having experienced purchasing staff. I also want to remind other Marshall University graduates that the doors are open for employment throughout West Virginia. Hopefully, they will choose to stay in West Virginia just as I did."

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17 Marshall students among participants in Undergraduate Research Day



philosophy, computer science and anthropology.

Eighty-eight students representing 15 West Virginia universities and colleges, including 17 from Marshall University, presented their discoveries in poster format in the 8th annual Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol in Charleston Tuesday, Jan. 25.

The event helps members of the state Legislature and the executive branch understand the importance of undergraduate research by talking directly with the students who produced these projects. The projects are original research and the posters are designed for a general audience.

The posters were in the areas of engineering, biochemistry, environmental science, biology, psychology, chemistry,



posters and advisers:

- Ennis Barbery, Kanawha County (Anthropology), "Narratives of Heritage: Preservation, Progress, and Public Space." - Dr. Brian Hoey, adviser
- Emily Beckelhimer, Cabell County (Biology), "FT-IR Analysis of Tissue Sections from Normal and Malignant Mouse Colorectal Tissues." - Dr. Menashl Cohenford, adviser
- Benjamin Blodgett, Knoxville, Tenn., and Shaheed Elhamdani, Cabell County (Biochemistry), "Understanding the Temperature Dependence of the Assembly of the Photosystem II Water-Oxidizing Complex." - Dr. Derrick Kolling, adviser
- Cameron Buchman, Cabell County, and Yasmine Zeld, Cabell County (Biochemistry), "Understanding How Photosynthesis Functions at a Molecular Level: Assembly of the Water-Splitting Catalyst." - Dr. Derrick Kolling, adviser

"These projects are important for students because they are some of the best preparation for entering the workforce or post-graduate education," said Dr. Michael Castellani, professor and chair of Marshall's chemistry department, and co-chair of the event's organizing committee. "To be successful, students must use knowledge from many courses and think critically to solve the problems that crop up in research. This skill is essential to their long-term success. Our event is a way of sharing one of the unique educational experiences provided by higher education with the general public."

The following is a list of Marshall University's participants, along with their home counties or cities, disciplines, research

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- Allison Combs, Mercer County, and Sara Lilly, Cabell County (Chemistry), "Exploring the Photochemistry of Radical Precursors." - Dr. Laura McCunn, adviser
- Laura Mader, Cabell County, Morgan Efaw, Wayne County, and Alison Williams, Wayne County (Biology), "Temperature and Exercise Effects on Bone Mineral Density and Growth Plate." - Dr. Maria Serrat, adviser
- Christopher Fine, Wayne County (Biochemistry), "Increasing Docetaxel Sensitivity of Prostate Cancer by Omega-3 Fatty Acids." - Dr. Elaine Hardman, adviser
- Hannah Mick, Cabell County (Biology), "Characterization and Identification of Novel Genes Affecting Gravitropism." - Dr. Marcia Harrison-Pitanello, adviser
- Patrick Murphy, New York (Biology), "Effects of Temperature on Net Nitrification in Nitrogen-Saturated Soils of a West Virginia Mixed Hardwood Forest." - Dr. Frank Gilliam, adviser
- Courtney Nichols, Kanawha County (Biochemistry), "Understanding the Lipid Metabolism of *Chlorella vulgaris* for Use of Lipids as Biofuels." - Dr. Derrick Kolling, adviser
- Amy Parsons-White, Kanawha County (Biology), "Driving Neurogenesis in Stem Cells Derived from Adults." - Dr. Elmer Price, adviser
- Adam Van Horn, Cabell County (Biochemistry), "The Role of Chromatin-Remodeling Proteins in the Differentiation Event of Sublingual Glands." - Dr. Philippe Georgel, adviser

Photos: Emily Beckelheimer (above) and Adam Van Horn (below) discuss their project with President Kopp at the Capitol Jan. 25.

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Jayaram, an anthropologist specializing in Haiti and a Ph.D. candidate at Columbia University, will be talking about Haitian history and culture as well as the aftermath of the earthquake. He also will be speaking to several classes before and after his presentation.

The presentation, titled "Disaster in Haiti ... Then Came 2010," starts at 6 p.m. in the Memorial Student Center Shawkey Room. It is free to the public and is sponsored by Latin American Studies, African American Studies, Multicultural Affairs, Modern Languages, Political Science, History and STAR (Students Taking Action and Response).

Dr. Chris White, associate professor in the history department and a member of the Latin American Studies committee, said the university became intimately involved in the relief effort by sending much-needed donations and medical personnel, "demonstrating our community's solidarity with that suffering island nation."

"Let's continue our solidarity with Haiti by attending this special presentation," White said.

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Seminars and presentations from Drinko 349 also are being aired at the South Charleston Campus, in MUGC 134. The summit will be two days of workshops, seminars and poster sessions regarding not only the services Information Technology offers, but library services as well.

During the Technology Summit, vendors will be set up in the Drinko Library atrium on the third floor. Dr. Monica Brooks, assistant vice president for online learning, said the event is open to students, faculty and staff.

"The summit is a perfect opportunity for people to come and see some of the technology and resources available to them, such as Wimba Live Classroom and other Wimba tools, TurningPoint clickers and Ask a Librarian, as well as meet with vendors from across the country who contribute to Marshall's library services," Brooks said.

The Spotlight Vendor this year is Turning Technologies, makers of TurningPoint "clicker" classroom response systems. Through Turning Technologies, Distinguished Educator Dr. Jeff Cain from the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy will conduct a workshop with hands-on clicker use and some best-practice techniques.

TurningPoint is a product by Turning Technologies that integrates seamlessly into Microsoft PowerPoint. This program creates a tab in PowerPoint that allows professors or presenters to create interactive slides. With a TurningPoint receiver, students can answer questions, take quizzes, or even attend by participating in the slideshow.

Students can participate with a ResponseCard, or "clicker." Clickers are small remotes that allow students to respond by choosing answers that are available on the slide. They also can participate through ResponseWare, which allows them to use any Internet-enabled device, such as a smartphone or laptop. Turning Technologies also offers phone apps for the iPhone and Blackberry.

There also will be opportunities for networking and some faculty fun. On Wednesday, a wine and cheese reception will follow the day's activities. Following Thursday's activities is a faculty mixer/dance party. Faculty and staff are welcome to participate and try out the new Xbox Kinect and Dance Central. Refreshments will be provided, and both events are in the Drinko Atrium from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

For more information regarding vendors and workshop/seminar times, visit www.marshall.edu/muonline/training/techsummit.htm.

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Browning's talk, which is free to the public, begins at 7 p.m. in Room BE 5 in the basement of the Memorial Student Center. She is speaking as part of Marshall's new program in African and African American Studies. Her talk is sponsored by the Honors College, the Phi Alpha Theta History Honorary Society of MU and the College of Liberal Arts.

The Freedom Riders were men and women that boarded buses, trains and planes and headed for the deep South in 1961 to test the 1960 Supreme Court ruling outlawing segregation in all interstate public facilities.

"I believe it is a wonderful opportunity for our students to learn how individuals, much like them, can stand up to an injustice and change the world in which they live," said Dr. David J. Pittenger, dean of the College of Liberal Arts. "Ms. Browning was a college student who answered the questions, 'If not us, who? If not now, when?' Her contributions to the civil rights movement stand as a lesson for us all."

Browning grew up on a small farm in rural South Georgia. She was one of the few Southern whites who joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Her activities led to her expulsion from the all-white Georgia State College for Women.

She moved to Atlanta where she became a leader of SNCC, listened to the speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and became active in a number of civil rights causes. At Marshall, she will discuss the history of the civil rights movement through her personal experiences.

Now a free-lance writer on a mountain in West Virginia, she expresses the values that brought her to the Civil Rights Movement as a citizen and "villager" supporting quality of life initiatives, children's programs and libraries.

"In addition to being a veteran of the civil rights movement Joan Robinson is quite a historian and has extensive knowledge on African American history in West Virginia," said Dr. David J. Peavler, an assistant professor in the Department of History and director of the African and African American Studies Program. "She has been very helpful in helping me with a new course I am teaching this semester, where students at Marshall conduct original research on African American history in West Virginia."

Peavler said examples of topics that the students are researching range from the 1917 Charleston NAACP victory against the film "Birth of a Nation" to the desegregation of schools in various localities. We will be publishing all of the students' work onto a website hosted by the Honors College," Peavler said. "The Honors College has done a great deal to make all of this happen, and I am quite thankful to Dean Mary Todd for this."

Another presentation is planned in February at Marshall in celebration of African American History month, according to Maurice Cooley, director of the Center for African American Students' Programs.

"Slave Dwellings," an historical overview and presentation (with slides) on more than 100 slave cabins found through the southern United States, will be presented free to the public at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 15 by Joseph McGill, preservationist, historian, and current program officer with the Southern Office of National Trust for Historic Preservation in Charleston, S.C. This presentation will take place in Room BE 5 as well.

"It is imperative that we continue the legacy, embraced by Carter G. Woodson, to educate our fellow Americans about the contributions of African Americans in our society and realize the importance of inviting our community to as many of these programs as possible," Cooley said.

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College of Health Professions to offer first Master of Science in Health Informatics in West Virginia

The College of Health Professions is offering a new interdisciplinary graduate program in Health Informatics on its Huntington campus. The degree is the first Master of Science in Health Informatics to be offered in West Virginia.

As the first truly intercollegiate program offered at Marshall, courses for the degree will come from the College of Health Professions, the College of Information Technology and Engineering, and the Lewis College of Business.

"I do not know of another program in the U.S. that uses expert instructors from three different, yet complementary, disciplines," said Dr. Charles Hossler, associate dean of the College of Health Professions. "Yet, this unique feature is what makes this program exceptional. Our graduates will have diverse perspectives related to Information Technology, which prepares our graduates in Health Informatics for real-life situations they will encounter in the marketplace."

Health Informatics specialists work to optimize an individual's health through information storage, transmission and usage. Dr. Michael Prewitt, dean of the College of Health Professions, said the purpose of the Health Informatics program at Marshall "is to educate our students who will use their expertise in improving health care of the citizens of West Virginia and the region by integrating information technology into the day-to-day care of individual patients."

Health Informatics focuses on the application of information systems and information systems management for medical research and clinical information technology support. It includes instruction in information systems, health information systems architecture, medical knowledge structures, medical language and image processing, quantitative medical decision modeling, imaging techniques, electronic medical records, medical research systems, clinical decision support, and informatics aspects of specific research and practical problems.

In 2004, the federal government issued an executive order that all health information be maintained in electronic format within 10 years. President George Bush signed the Executive Order entitled "Promoting Quality and Efficient Health Care in Federal Government Administered or Sponsored Health Care Programs."

Health Informatics begins this fall. For applications, contact the graduate college at ext. 6-6606. More information is available on the College of Health Professions Web pages or by calling the college at ext. 6-2620.

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The Newsletter for Marshall University

February 9, 2011

Forensics professor receives federal grant to analyze interpretation of fire debris

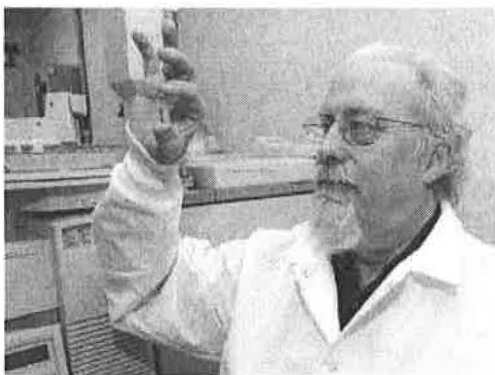


Marshall University has received a \$540,752 grant from the National Institute of Justice for a two-year project to study factors that affect interpretation of data by fire debris analysts and to develop a computer program to aid in interpretation.

Dr. J. Graham Rankin, a professor of forensic chemistry in the Forensic Science Graduate Program, is conducting the study, which began January 1, 2011.

A National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report released in 2009 on the practice of forensic science recommended more basic research to determine the reliability of many tests - like fire debris analysis -

that depend on pattern recognition. Rankin said the grant program is a positive response to the NAS report.



He said the study will help fire debris analysts in crime laboratories and private laboratories better understand how to interpret their results. Fire debris analysts work closely with fire debris investigators in local fire departments to determine whether a fire was accidental or intentional.

"Our research will aid in improving the understanding of the accuracy and reliability of the data commonly used by fire debris analysts, and we will be validating techniques," Rankin said. "This interpretation will be used to determine the presence and classification of ignitable liquid residues found in fire debris which may indicate that the fire was deliberately started."

For the study, ignitable liquids such as gasoline, kerosene, charcoal lighters and other commonly used accelerants will be used to ignite a variety of wood products and carpeting found in homes. The fire debris generated will be analyzed by two standard methods used by the forensic community.

Data produced by these methods will be distributed to fire debris analysts across the country as "blind case files" for determination about whether or not an ignitable liquid is present and to identify its classification.

Preliminary analyses performed this summer by Amanda Heeren, a second-year graduate student, indicate that the type of wood as well as the extent of charring are important factors in chromatographic patterns from the standard methods. In February, Heeren will present her work at the American Academy of Forensic Sciences national meeting in Chicago. She continues to work on the research project this academic year.

Statistical analysis of the results will be used to determine the number of "false positives" (a conclusion that an ignitable liquid is present, when none is), "false negatives" (concluding that no ignitable liquid is present when one was used) and

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any incorrect classification of the residue.

"Because background compound products in fire debris are frequently formed which can appear as low levels of ignitable liquids, most lab protocols require a significant amount present to 'make a call.' One factor we are investigating is the minimal amount of ignitable liquid residues needed to make a correct assignment to one of the classes of ignitable liquids as specified by the standard method used," Rankin said. "One other important factor is that the presence of an ignitable liquid does not mean it was used as an accelerant in an intentional fire. It could be incidental, like residual paint thinner in a freshly painted wall, or maybe the cause of an accidental fire, like gasoline fumes ignited by a hot water heater pilot in an enclosed garage."

A co-principal investigator on the grant is Dr. Nicholas Petraco, associate professor in the John Jay College of Law, City University of New York, in New York City

The activities for the study, "Interpretation of Ignitable Liquid Residues in Fire Debris Analysis: Effect of Competitive Adsorption, Development of an Expert System and Assessment of the False Positive/Incorrect Assignment Rate," are funded through the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Research conducted by Hereen was supported through the National Institute of Justice.

Photos:

Above: Wood samples are charred to different levels of weight loss to study the effects of the amount of charring on recovery of possible accelerants.

Below: Dr. J. Graham Rankin, a professor of forensic chemistry in the Forensic Science Graduate Program at Marshall University, analyzes gasoline in his lab.

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The Newsletter for Marshall University February 9, 2011

Benefit to assist physician in Haiti

The Marshall University Department of Orthopaedic Surgery will have a fund-raiser Saturday, Feb. 12, to assist a Haiti physician with whom Marshall faculty and staff have worked in providing aid to Haitians in the wake of the 2010 earthquake.

The physician, Dr. Edmond Elysee, is medical director of Double Harvest Hospital, which has housed Marshall medical professionals and others during relief visits to Haiti. His home was destroyed in the earthquake, and he and his wife also have lost their personal vehicles, which were frequently used to transport patients to and from the hospital.

As part of a goal to raise \$15,000 to help the family get back on its feet, the department is hosting an evening of hors d'oeuvres and live music beginning at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 12 at the New Song Church (the old Covenant School building at 5800 US Route 60 East). Donations are tax-deductible, and 100 percent of the proceeds will go toward the cause. Donations may be made payable to MU Foundation - Dept. of Orthopaedic Surgery Haiti Fund.

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The Newsletter for Marshall University

February 9, 2011

Profile: Nat DeBruin



Their long-stilled voices can still be heard. If not actually audible, they are still present, alive and vibrant in the mountains of containers and shelves that house the Marshall Archives and Special Collections. There are the voices of the students and faculty from the humble one-room wooden building that was the origin of the now sprawling Marshall University and the thousands of students and staff who followed through the decades and centuries. Scholars, teachers, athletes, soldiers, scientists, poets, writers and artists are all linked together in a rich tapestry of facts, figures and sometimes faces -snapshots of times and places as the eras passed.

Go to the second floor of the Morrow Library and you will find Nat DeBruin, archivist, manuscript librarian, and adjunct faculty member, who can guide you through thousands of linear feet of archival materials, from the earliest

document—a copy of the 1837 land deed that handed Marshall Academy property over to the Methodist Church which was the formation of Marshall University, to yesterday's Parthenon.

"The archives are the records of the university," he says. "It's anything that has been published by the university, especially as it relates to academic/faculty/student life. We have a relationship with several offices such as the President's Office and Academic Affairs so that we receive their records on a regular basis. We also have a good quantity of items such as yearbooks, catalogs, alumni directories, student publications and some student records. Then there are several notable special collections."

Special Collections are open to use but not in the traditional library setting, DeBruin explains. "One of the differences between libraries and archives is that librarians tend to catalog and index individual items, but with archives or collections we can't do that except under special circumstances. It would be impossible to catalog every piece of paper contained in our collections. We do have an inventory where you can get a general idea of dates, peoples' names and then we can bring a box of materials to users. We have a lot of people doing genealogy searches."

Those searching Marshall history would find that 1837 copy of the land transfer, but after that there is pretty much of a gap stretching into the 1870s, when enrollment began to inch upward. There are helpful notations in catalogs of the time noting that enrollment is now 200, then 250, 300, small increments perhaps, but steadily climbing. But the catalogs of that era were not today's impersonal, detailed listing of courses. Rather the circa 1870s publications were chatty reflections of life just post-Civil War and filled with not just course listings and descriptions, but a plethora of information with some social notes thrown in for good measure. Students could indeed peruse course offerings and descriptions, but they could also find lists of faculty and students, descriptions of buildings and advice as to what students could expect for room/board/books and campus life, plus enrollment information. They were a rich information highway before there were

highways. "These catalogs are really valuable and interesting as they are among the oldest records we have," said DeBruin. "They were course listings plus."

The archives reflect the physical growth of Marshall as well. Beginning in the 1870s, brick buildings began to spring up all over the Huntington campus. The oldest is Old Main, which was actually the site of the one-room structure. That original log cabin was located in the eastern part of Old Main, approximately where the Yeager Scholars offices are now, DeBruin says. For the history buffs, Old Main research is just a computer click away. "Lisle Brown, Curator of Special Collections, is our expert on Old Main," he says. "There is a link through the library website, to the Special Collections website, where Lisle has created a great virtual exhibit on the growth of Old Main."

The Special Collections department also houses the West Virginia Collection, books and periodicals related to West Virginia and Appalachian culture, history and literature. This collection is the responsibility of Kathleen Bledsoe, Special Collections Librarian, who is also responsible for the West Virginia State Documents Collection, the Rare Book Collection and the map collections.

Integral to the department are the special collections which give insight and historical importance to a variety of subjects. There's the Chuck Yeager Collection, which has its own Yeager Room, where numerous artifacts, photos, memorabilia and trophies commemorating the life of the famous flying ace are displayed. The Fred Lambert collection is a huge genealogical resource, DeBruin says, particularly for local people. Lambert, who was a high school principal in Ohio, taught in West Virginia as well and left behind a large number of detailed records which are heavily used by people doing family searches.

For photography sleuths, there is the Barta Photographic Studio collection, with its nearly 200,000 negatives covering the history of Huntington and Cabell County. Fortunately for collection purposes, in years past it was the custom for local studios that went out of business to donate or sell their accumulated photo negatives to other studios. Barta apparently ended up with materials from several defunct businesses, which are now housed at Marshall.

Perhaps the best known of all Marshall's collection is the Roseanna Blake Civil War collection. Blake was a Marshall graduate who went on to earn a law degree and practice in the U. S. Department of Labor. As a child she had been given a book about Robert E. Lee, which led to a lifelong fascination not only with the charismatic Confederate general but the Civil War as well. She began collecting artifacts, and as she prospered she was able to acquire some unique and rare articles. Among the rarest documents, and a highlight of the collection, are Confederate imprints which were the actual laws published by the Confederate congress during the war. "We have one of the largest collections of those outside of the National Archives," DeBruin says. "There are lots of unique items in her collection. During the war the Union Navy blockaded confederate ports and among the items they couldn't get through was newsprint so printers resorted to using wallpaper. We have a couple of the books and some documents that are printed on wallpaper. In addition, Roseanna Blake actually was able to obtain some weapons and there is a large collection of original music published during the war by both sides which has been used by local groups to provide period music on period instruments."

The Blake collection is so well known that Jack Dickinson, a bibliographer who works part-time for the library, gets requests from around the world for information from the collection. "It's very well known and well used and we're happy to have it," DeBruin says. "Since 2011 marks the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War, we anticipate it to be well used in the coming year."

Collections can range in size from a single page document up to the 45 boxes of materials donated by writer Nelson Bond, former Marshall student and a prolific author of science fiction during the Golden Age of the 1930s and 1940s.

But the behemoth of the collections is the WSAZ-TV film archives, which contain millions of feet of film and video dating back to 1952 and running through 2003. Through shifting technology the collection documents the newsworthy events that happened both nationally and locally through those 51 years and is heavily used, both by WSAZ and others, DeBruin says. A popular feature on MU library's site is the daily "50 Years Ago Today" segments which use clips from that collection. Andrew Earles, the department's digital media specialist, is busy converting the older film and video formats into digital files for long-term preservation and use of the materials.

Among the artifacts that are treasured by both students and alumni are the Parthenon and yearbook archives which contain complete records of both those publications, beginning with the 1898 Volume I, Issue I for the Parthenon. The yearbooks are interesting because they are a microcosm of the passing decades and capture campus life frozen in a particular time and place.

The yearbooks have a unique history of their own. Beginning in 1908 annuals were produced through 1931, then there was a hiatus of several years, first because of the Great Depression when money was scarce and later through the war years when there were paper shortages. Publication resumed in 1948 but ceased for good in 1993. The 1960s with its counter culture of free and easy lifestyles resulted in some pretty funky yearbooks, according to DeBruin. For a while it appeared photos and artwork were in, words were out. "I think some of those books only had five words," he says jokingly but not far off the mark. The books were creative and colorful and certainly original, a colorful collage of campus life with a nod to the tumultuous changes taking place around the country. But largely without captions or identifying text, they can be incomprehensible to readers puzzling to identify people or events. But fortunately restraint returned in a few years and yearbooks returned to their more traditional—and readable—formats.

But it's the items from the 2006 movie, "We Are... Marshall" that were donated by Warner Brothers Studio, that undoubtedly sparks the most interest. "Warner Brothers was extremely generous in donating a wide assortment of props and items from the movie," DeBruin says. There's a large assortment of clothing, all made especially for the movie—football jerseys, cheerleader outfits, band uniforms, letter jackets, even a Marco costume, along with other items such as working scripts and 1970-71 license plates (made of cardboard or plastic, he says). In fact there was so much clothing donated the Marshall Foundation occasionally uses them in fundraising campaigns. Each item carries with it a certificate of authenticity from Warner Brothers, he points out.

However the jewel in the "We Are... Marshall" collection has to be the two cringe-inducing polyester sportcoats worn by the film's two hunky Matthews—Fox and McConaughy. With their seemingly yard-wide lapels, garish checks and loud colors they draw head-shaking disbelief from viewers that people actually once dressed that way. Although the coats have had some limited display, right now they're tucked away from public view until it can be figured out how to safely display and preserve them. And remember that montage in the movie where the coaches are assessing their recruiting efforts? Matthew McConaughy is frenetically scribbling names of potential players on a chalkboard, only to reluctantly cross them out as they commit to other schools, many to arch rival WVU. They've got that chalkboard, too, straight from that scene with the writing intact, crossouts and all.

DeBruin has been at Marshall since 2006, coming from Frostburg State University in Maryland where he was head of the ROTC detachment before his retirement from active duty in 1995. He's always had an interest in library archives, he says, which in a circuitous route actually led to a 19-year detour between library stints. Originally from Colorado, his family lived all over the country when he was young, eventually settling in Chicago, where his mother and brother still live. He received a B.A. in history from Texas A & M and it was while employed as a work-study student in their archives that he developed a lifelong interest in archives. Serving in the Army for 20 years, he did tours in Germany and Desert Storm, as well as at posts throughout the U.S. Upon retirement he decided to fulfill a lifelong dream and earned an M.L.S. degree at the University of Maryland, because "I knew archival work was what I wanted to do." His first full-time library job was at a state prison in Cumberland, Maryland. "It wasn't at all like "Shawshank Redemption," he says wryly, referring to the award-winning movie set in a prison. "I do have some stories I could tell."

Today he and his wife, Debra, are bike enthusiasts who love to go in search of good biking trails. They particularly like the Greenbrier trail and the rails-to-trails sites in the Parkersburg/Athens, Ohio areas. During mild weather they can be found on their 16-foot sailboat and they've recently discovered Cave Run State Park in Kentucky, perfect for a boat of its size. They've been sailing for 15 years and, he candidly admits, "Sailing can be a lot of fun but a whole lot of work." His winter and rainy day hobby is model railroading and that's a work in progress, he says. It's a good stress reliever, which involves a good bit of problem-solving abilities. There's a lot of wiring involved, scenery building and an opportunity to utilize carpentry skills, he explains.

Currently he's making time to work on a second master's degree, this one in history, and he regularly teaches a course in the history department on archives and special collections. The classes are hands-on and provide valuable assistance because students learn to process collections. Right now, only about 150 of the library's collections are to the point where

they are easily accessible to the public, he explains.

"They're learning and they're also adding to the number of processed collections," he says.

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